

Interview H0215: with Shakabpa, Wangchug Denden [tib. zhwa sgab pa, dbang phyug bde ldan], (India, 1983) : Part No. 8 of 13

W.D. Shakabpa was a very prominent aristocratic government official who held the rank of Tsipön. He is the author of "Tibet: A Political History." He discusses how Taktra was honest and fair in the beginning, using the example of the incident with the lay official Dingja. The subject also talks about how Surkhang and Kapshöba didn't get along well and how Kusangtse and Khyungram were demoted. He also explains in detail the procedures involved when the government officials went to receive the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama at Nagchuka. He also discusses the plot of Reting against Taktra.

In that first year [of Taktra's reign] there was an incident involving the lay official Dingja [tib. lding bya]. He was supposed to be the Yarsor official, but he made excuses and asked for the permission to be the Yarsor the next year. After Dingja, this job fell [by turns] on [Namseling](#) who had just returned from Kham [a difficult posting]. The Tsikhang gave a favorable decision allowing Dingja to be excused. At that time, the Tsikhang kind of favored Dingja and submitted a plan. This was corrected a little, but still was supported by the Kashag. Then the proposed decision finally went to the Regent. Instead of approving this, the Regent made a complete change and [in the process] gave a strong warning that people have to be careful, etc. Even the Tsipön, when the note came back to them said among themselves that, "Well, it looks as if he is going to be straightforward and honest. Even I thought that it he would be a good Regent if he could do things like this without partiality. However, later it became very bad and even for appointments of the [Sawang](#), etc., this was not followed and they destroyed this great Lama completely.

Q

It was mainly done by the Chandzö Chemo [the Regent's chandzö] and probably the [nendrön](#) also, right?

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A

Yes. This was the latter [nendrön](#) Thubten Lengmön, the one who walked with a limp. This limping [nendrön](#) has had much bad said about him. Before the limping man came into office, the [nendrön](#) was Ngawang Namgyel, who later became the Jigyab khenpo. He had a big nose. It was said that he had acted slightly fair while the present [nendrön](#) was not getting along well even with the Talama.

Q

Wasn't it the Talama who was responsible for bringing him into this position?

A

Yes, I have heard that too.

Q

Wasn't he brought from Drib [tib. grib] or somewhere directly to this position?

A

No. He was the head of Samye Dzong. It was from there he went directly. This was a tremendous jump for him. And Talama did it. But later he could not get along well with Talama. The talk at that time was about what accounted for such a huge jump. They said it was because he was very capable. Later I discovered that he was not capable, but he was a very mean and evil-minded person, but pretended not to be like that. He was really something. He only served as [nendrön](#) for a short time, three years.

Q

No he was there for a longer time.

A

When [Kapshöba](#) was demoted, wasn't he already [nendrön](#)?

Q

Yes, I heard he was there and he even instructed his subordinate [shöndrön](#) to keep a stick and if [Kapshöba](#) touched inside his pocket go ahead and beat him.

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A

Yes, yes, it was very strange for [Kapshöba](#) because he was a [Shape](#) already.

Q

While talking about [Kapshöba](#), I have heard that [Kapshöba](#) did not get along well with Surkhang and that Surkhang didn't like some of Kapshöba's comments and sniffed with his nose [tib. sna shu] [a jeer] and walked out of the Kashag meeting. This was just before [Kapshöba](#) was thrown out.

A

I don't know about this. I heard from Liushar who was in the Foreign Office about once when he went to consult the Kashag about a gift to be carried by the two officials who went on the Victory Congratulations Mission [tib. g.yul rgyal bkra shis bde legs] for the allies-- China, Britain and America [in World War II]. I don't remember exactly, but Liushar was the one in charge of the Foreign Office, and he went to consult with the Kashag about designing of a gift for the Allies. The Foreign Office had to propose the design. [Kapshöba](#) gave certain designs about which Surkhang made an adverse remark that if you do like this it will look like that [didn't remember the exact comment, only that it was negative]. Thus [Kapshöba](#) had to drop his suggestion. After that they discussed what would be better. Then Surkhang gave some suggestions for which [Kapshöba](#) made even a more sarcastic comment. So Liushar felt very embarrassed.

Q

I have heard that [Kapshöba](#) had made certain remarks when the Trungtsi made the report to the Kashak and one day Surkhang told him, "I will speak first and if there is something I have left out then you can talk."

A

That wouldn't be true. [Lukhangwa](#) was there, so how could they do it. All had to have strong respect for [Lukhangwa](#), because he was very straightforward and honest. During the tenure of [Lukhangwa](#) as Tshipön, the Kashag would never make adverse remarks like scolding to the Tshipön. It was more or less because of [Lukhangwa](#). As a person, he wore very poor clothes, had a terrible horse, and horrible servants, but as far as his

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responsibilities were concerned, he would insist and fight for things and see they got done for the best interests. And if there were things he had to say, he would speak very openly without any hesitation either within the Trungtsi or in the Tsikhang or even with the Kashag or the Tsondu. So everybody had very high regard for him and it would be impossible to make adverse [personal attacks] remarks about the [Shape](#) while he was there. So when I was there as a Tsipön and was going to the Kashag, I never saw any such thing. Everything always looked beautiful and nice. [there were no incidents like this]. When the Trungtsi came they always looked very nice.

Q

Probably, [Kapshöba](#) was very capable, right?

A

Yes. When [Kapshöba](#) was there, he always was very tactful [tib. mkhas po] and would praise the Trungtsi making them happy. [Kapshöba](#) spoke very nicely.

Q

I heard that the whipping of the Lhündrub Dzong monks was because of [Kapshöba](#).

A

He even hit the monk Repe Gyau on the head with the [samtra](#).

Q

I've heard that [Kapshöba](#) even corrected the edict that sent Repe Gyau to Hor Drachen and later Repe saw that the correction said, "This is the root of all the poison." [tib. dug rtsa bong nag]. So the [dzong](#) should not let him evade punishment [tib. yan por ma gtong]."

A

No, it can't be. He was not allowed to do that. I was there as an Investigator Committee member. He would never dare to do it.

Q

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This Repe Gyau has told people that he had seen [Kapshöba](#) doing it (adding words to alter the decision).

A

It's impossible. I'm not inclined to accept this. And how could Repe Gyau have seen it?

Q

Repe Gyau saw it later in Drachen.

A

I mean, how could he know that [Kapshöba](#) made the corrections?

Q

While he was about to be sent, he saw [Kapshöba](#) take out the edict and add something.

A

At that time we were also there.

Q

Repe Gyau told this to many people after he came back and he told [Drigung](#) Könchog Samten [tib. 'bri [gung](#) dkon mchog bsam gtan] in Drachen Dzong. At that time, it was said that [Kapshöba](#) was said to be a kind of patron to the [Je](#) College. So probably he was acting kind of two-faced. I heard that Repe Gyau thought that [Kapshöba](#) might have made it better [lessor], but when he looked at it in Drachen he found that he made the correction mentioned above.

A

I still can't believe this, because all the edicts were sealed by the Kashag.

Q

Probably, they had to read it, right?

A

Yes, the verdicts had to be read.

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Q

He said that after the reading, [Kapshöba](#) took it and made the corrections.

A

Oh my! To tell you the truth, I swear by the three jewels that I don't remember that. After they were given the departure lashing, soldiers came and took them away. However, as I told you, one day [earlier] he tried to correct one of the Tsondu documents but Dombo and [Lukhangwa](#) both shouted a lot at him. But this was much earlier when they wanted to give a retirement gift to Regent as token of appreciation. It was at that time that the Töpa Khenpo created a lot of problems.

Q

Where was that Töpa Khenpo from?

A

I don't know. He had a kind of darkish face. I was told he was very learned, but he created a real mess.

Q

As for [Khyungram](#), what he was supposed to have said was not directly aimed at Reting. Isn't that true?

A

Look, I was at the Tsondu. [Khyungram](#) did say that, but he didn't say it so obviously, and mentioned it more as a casual remark. So the Töpa Khenpo immediately repeated the words and said that you are saying this against Reting. Such a thing happened and this hurt Reting very much. I was there in the meeting. It was held in the [Tsuglagang](#) in the room known as Songjong [tib. zur 'phyongs]. This was a very bad incident. So, coming back to [Kapshöba](#), he did all sort of weird things like that.

Q

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I heard that Reting and [Khyungram](#) were very close before. And not only was he close, but it was [Khyungram](#) who insisted that Reting not resign when Reting pushed Langdön out.

A

Yes. I was there even then. We went to Reting's summer cottage in [Shide](#). At that time [Khyungram](#) not only spoke strongly, but prostrated before Reting. I was there.

Q

Then what happened after that?

A

Because of this remark, people said that their relationship deteriorated.

Q

Do you consider this as one of the worst acts of Reting?

A

Yes. This one and the Kutsangtse incident.

Q

What happened to Kusangtse?

A

That was written by Kusangtse himself in detail. That was true.

Q

Is that the only reason why he punished Kusangtse?

A

I don't know. But it was definitely done very severely during the [Shodön](#) [opera], in Lhasa. [this was very shocking since it was in done the mist of lots and lots of people]. It was on the day of [Shodön](#) and it was very humiliating that in front of the public you have your official's hair knot cut off and your dress and official boots removed. Even though he didn't

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have to walk through the public and could leave through a side door, the timing was such that Reting did this in a very cruel manner. I don't know what the reason for this was.

Q

I heard that the other Kusangtse Dzasa who was in the search party of Dalai Lama was having some problems with Ketsang Rinpoche and Khyenrabla.

A

No, that is not likely because what I heard was that Ketsang Rinpoche was the head and Khyenrabla [tib. mkhyen rab lags], who was the Nagchu Khenpo [tib. nag [chu](#) mkhan po] at the time, was a staff member, and Lobsang Tsewang [tib. blo bzang tshe dbang] was also a staff member. And it was not mentioned at all in Kusangtse's book.

Q

I had a talk with Jayangkyl [tib. 'jam dbyangs dkyil] Khenjung who is in Nepal.

A

Yes, he will definitely know since he was there.

Q

Khenjung told me something, but I wanted to recheck. As you well know, he sometimes exaggerates and sometimes he makes up things and covers up others.

A

Yes, he definitely does that.

Q

Khenjung had told me a lot about how Kusangtse didn't do well so Ketsang Rinpoche had difficulty getting good cooperation with Reting Rinpoche. He said that he was acting difficult and that certain letters that Ketsang Rinpoche had sent to Reting never reached there because [Langdün](#) didn't deliver them to Reting Rinpoche and he had to come to Lhasa himself as a real messenger.

A

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I have never heard that. Did he say that?

Q

Yes.

A

You have to be careful, because he makes lot of huge different stories though he is a nice person. If what he said was true, there was a reason for punishing Kusangtse.

Even if that was true, why should he punish his other family members?

Q

This may have been just a warning to him in [Amdo](#), because in the pronouncement of the verdict decision they said that because one of your family members is still in [Amdo](#) your property has not been confiscated. I have heard that. So if this was not true, then Reting's act was completely without any reason [tib. don dag med pa].

A

In Kheme's [tib. [khe](#) smad] book he mentioned that it was done without reason and that he himself was too straightforward and honest and thus he could not please the authorities, so that is why it happened. Kusangtse said his family member could not satisfy Reting's needs from the [Laja](#) Treasury because he said some things were also needed for the government too, so he [Reting] can't borrow them. So Reting got upset and used two small excuses of not taking a departure audience and not properly carrying outs some repairs at Phabongka to give a huge pronouncement in the decision. [he threw him out of the government]. This is what Kheme Dzasa wrote.

Q

This was what Kheme Dzasa wrote. If this was true, then there was a reason.

A

Khenjung was among the servants.

Q

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I think what Khenjung said was partially true, though it was not exactly like what he said. Anyway, Kusangtse [he is the same as Kheme Dzasa] was reluctant to go from Chamdo. This might be true.

A

Kusangtse and Ketsang were related.

Q

Regarding Kusangtse and Ketsang not getting along well, not only did this Khenjung mentioned this, but Gongma Rinpoche also said this saying that he heard this from Ketsang, but not like what Khenjung said. Khenjung said that the Chinese knew about the reincarnation and they suspected Kusangtse and they probably reported these to Lhasa. Reting Rinpoche told Tragyab [tib. brag rgyab] Rinpoche that after [Langdün](#) resigned he received Ketsang Rinpoche's letters. Before he didn't receive many important letters.

A

Oh my, this is shocking. But how could [Langdün](#) have such arrogance to stop them?

Q

The Kashag might have stopped them.

A

The Kashag was not allowed to do that. That was impossible because who can bear the responsibility concerning the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. It was not likely and I swear by the three jewels that I didn't know what was behind this. Moreover, I worked with Kungö Khenjung for more than 3-4 years and I swear I never heard even a word like this. Khenjung was very dedicated to the Tibetan Government and the Tibetan cause and he spoke straightforwardly to people without considering any reaction against him, but sometimes he exaggerated greatly and we become doubtful and we had to withdraw thinking it would be better to do that.

Q

Anyway, there was talk between Ketsang and Reting regarding [Langdün](#). I also heard that Karmashar [tib. skar ma shag] Deity gave the prophecy through the oracle saying,

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"The happy sun of the world will rise from the south." [tib. 'dzam gling skyid pa'i nyi ma lho nas shar] is that true?

A

Karmashar normally or very often gives certain signs of future events in Lhasa, but I've never heard this statement or him having said anything about other reincarnations.

Q

What really had happened with the [Khyungram](#) incident? What was the real inside story?

A

The [Khyungram](#) thing was what people normally say regarding the remark he made. This hurt Reting badly and then they had this appeal from the Horpa [people], and they wanted to investigate. When they wanted to investigate, [Khyungram](#) refused to attend the Investigatory Committee and instead went to the monasteries to seek support. He also made an appeal which was supposed to have been corrected by [Bönshö](#). So many things were said and finally it was said that it was not [Bönshö](#) but was Gajang Tempa. So as a result, even Gajang Tempa was punished along with [Khyungram](#).

Then they made the arrangement for the tents and Senangse [tib. sras nang sras] who was the Phogpön and a member of the [Langdün](#) family was in charge of preparing the tents and putting up the placards for tents. Everything was prepared before and then we had the Kashag party ahead of schedule that year because of the events coming. During the Kashag Party [tib. thugs spro], the message came all of a sudden saying that the Dalai Lama should leave soon before the black [inauspicious] month. So we left suddenly but it was not that much of an emergency departure.

The first night we spent in Dromtö [tib. 'brom stod] and the second night we spent in Jaritramo [tib. lcags ri khra mo]. I was among the entourage and in Jaritramo, just as we got settled, a horse messenger [tib. rta shad] arrived saying that the Dalai Lama is going to reach Gabshi Namocha [tib. dga' bzhi na mo che] and suddenly a trumpet was blown and they said this was the call for a meeting of the officials.

Q

How did they blow the gathering trumpet? Did they do that when a [Shape](#) travels?

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A

It was blown by the monks of [Namgye Tratsang](#) because it was used to receive the Dalai Lama. So we went to the tent of the shape. The [Trunyichemmo](#) Talama at the time was Dombo. The [Sawang](#) said that Talama and I are leaving right now. You people don't have to go in an official convoy but leave individually and all of you should arrive at Gabshi Namoche before the sunrise on such and such a day. He also said that the arrival date had been fixed. This was announced. Thereafter, there was no official convoy and also no arrangements of stopovers, etc. It was all done individually. So almost everyone had to run to see who got where first. [got there on time]. Those who had good horses went and those of us with not good horses could not keep up with the others. So we came a day after the others, but we reached Gabshi Namoche on time. Many other officials like Trekhang and Tresur [tib. bkras zur] did not even reach there until the Dalai Lama reached the Nagchu Shapten [tib. zhabs brtan] Monastery.

Q

Did those who were late get punished?

A

No, they took the wrong route and got lost in the darkness. When I reached there it was a little before sunrise. The Dalai Lama had already arrived, but the functions had not yet started. So I was okay and was there when they began the functions just before daylight. I was not there, but I heard that the arrival scarf was given by the shape with [light from a] kerosene pressure [Coleman] lamp when the Dalai Lama came in his palanquin.

Q

Were you a Tsipön then?

A

I was a [tsipa](#).

Q

Oh yes, this was the time of Reting.

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A

I never heard that anyone was to come first and then someone second. They just arrived one after another.

Q

I heard that [Bönshö](#) was almost put down, right?

A

I heard that during the [Khyungram](#) period they almost threw out [Bönshö](#), but it was proved that he didn't do the corrections for Khyungram's letter.

Q

I heard that [Bönshö](#) saw the letter, but didn't make the corrections.

A

Those two were very close relatives; they are kind of first cousins.

Q

What do you think was the best achievement of Reting Rinpoche other than finding the Dalai Lama and rebuilding of monasteries in the south?

A

The Samye repairs were very good, and others repairs were good. But besides that, I have nothing to say.

Q

What about the social benefit for the people.

A

I don't know. I can't remember off hand.

Q

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What about [Taktra](#). We know he did religious service. He carved large numbers of collected works of lamas whose writings were rare in Tibet. And he even completed the 13th Dalai Lama's work of carving the Kangyur at [Shöl](#) with its index. Then also he attempted to make a list of the xylographic blocks available in Central Tibet.

A

He also prepared and completed the inventory of the contents of the 13th the Dalai Lama's tomb Gelek Dönjo [tib. dge legs 'dod 'jo].

Q

Besides this, from the political point of view, rather the economic and social point of view, what are the best contributions he made?

A

I cannot say off hand.

Q

How many years did [Taktra](#) remain in power?

A

It was the year my eldest son Künsang Namgyal [tib. kun bzang nam rgyal] was born. I have a list I'll give you later. I have a detailed list I'll give you. Probably, he was the Regent for 5-6 years.

Q

Taktra had dismissed, as his first major change, Langchung as a shape.

A

[pause] Yes, he did. I wonder why?

Q

I heard that Langchung left Chamdo without getting a successor to replace him after 3 years of his term.

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A

Whatever really happened, I cannot remember exactly why. [he doesn't accept this reason]. Langchung was appointed by the 13th Dalai Lama. After that, Yuthok went to Chamdo as a [dzasa](#).

Q

At that time, were yet to become a Tsipön?

A

Yes.

Q

As we had talked before, the abbots of [Sendregasum](#) submitted three points to the Kashag when they wanted to get [Langdün](#) out. One of the points said that Chamdo being an important area there should have been a [Shape](#). This might have made the members of the Kashag agree that one of them had to go there for three years. They might have discussed [previously] that they will rotate, but the others didn't go, so he [Langjunga] got angry and returned.

A

First Trenthong was there. He was a Katshab. They thought to replace him with Trekhang [Sawang](#) Lama, but he excused himself from that. Then they appointed Dzasa Surkhang Surpa and Lobsang Pandenla and they served as Joint Dzasa. After that Langchung went. Langchung, then Yuthok, then Ngabö.

Q

No. Lhalu was there.

A

Yes.

Q

Who was Langchung's replacement?

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A

When Surkhang was appointed [Shape], [Bönshö](#) was there, and [Kalön](#) Lama Temba Jayan; Phünkhang. [Reting appointed all but Surkhang; [Langdün](#) was a leftover from the 13th Dalai Lama's time]. Whether it was as Bönshö's substitute after his death or after Phünkhang's demotion, then [Kapshöba](#) or Lhalu was promoted.

Q

It may be that the replacement for [Bönshö](#) was [Kapshöba](#), and then after demoting Phünkhang, Lhalu was promoted.

A

That's definite. Lhalu was Tsipön before and when Phünkhang's trouble came, Lhalu and Chönphel Thubten were the two Investigating Committee members. They even called Phünkhang Lhajam to the committee and asked her questions. I don't remember why, Phünkhang had two troubles.

Q

The 2nd may be that Phünkhang [Sawangchemmo](#) was supposed to forward Reting's letter to the Tsenyi Trülku [tib. mtshan nyid sprul sku] through the envelope of the Kashag.

A

No, no, no. I don't think that was it. When this bomb came, then a few days later the Reting trouble came. When the Kashag instructed the Trungtsi at that time, they told us that Reting Labrang should be sealed. Normally Phünkhang and [Sandutsang](#) were the two families very close to Reting, so these two houses should also be sealed. There was no talk of any letter, etc. That day I don't remember whether it was during the Mönlam or [Tsongjö](#), but the [Shengo](#) were all there [at Reting] when we sealed the Reting property.

Q

It was at [Tsongjö](#).

A

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Is that so? Anyway, after Reting was sealed we discussed among the Trungtsi and it was getting late and instead of going all together, we said we should divide up and some go to Phünkhang and some to [Sandu](#). Ngabö said he is close to [Sandu](#), so he can go there. So I went with [Lukhangwa](#) to Phünkhang.

Q

If Ngabö is close to [Sandu](#), how could he go to seal their property?

A

No, no. Since he knows them, he can talk with them so there won't be any trouble.

Q

Who went with Ngabö?

A

Probably [Namseling](#). So the two junior Tshipön went to [Sandu](#) and the 4 senior Trungtsi went to Phünkhang [he, [Lukhangwa](#) and the 2 Trunyichemmo]. We made this division in Reting Labrang itself. Then we went to Phünkhang house. When we reached there, [Sawangchemmo](#) was not there. When they inquired where he was, they said he went to see some Lama, maybe Phurbujog Rinpoche or somebody. Shortly after that, he came wearing a Damotse [ch. da mao zi] [hat](#). Then we all saluted [tib. phyag 'bul] to him. And then we explained to him why we were there. Then we also told him, whichever room he wants to stay in he should choose and the rest of the rooms we were going to seal.

There was one room with a raised platform and another small adjoining room, and he asked us to leave these two. We did that. Then the Phünkhang people asked whether they can take out their food stores and keep them. Kündeling was the [shöndrön](#) and the representative of the Shö ga and Phala was the tsendrön, the representative of the Dalai Lama's [Tse](#) ga [tib. rtse 'gag]. They took out the necessary stores, but the Trungtsi didn't go down there. Then on the east side of Phünkhang' house there was another room that was left for Phünkhang's son and also for the lady Lhagam. All the other rooms were sealed up. This is what we did. In the end, Phünkhang came out of the investigation without any fault as did [Sandutsang](#). I was there.

Q

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It seems to me that most appointments made to key posts by [Taktra](#), when we look at it with proper consideration, it seems money had played an important role. But when you look carefully, we see that loyalty was more important as the basis, and if you got money on top of that, that's good too. But it seems loyalty was the main thing. For example, although Surkhang bribed [Taktra](#) with a basketful of gold, Surkhang also lost an estate in the case with Shelkar Lingpa and Lhalu we all know, and [Kapshöba](#) also had problems with Reting, etc. So it looks like [Taktra](#) was considering loyalty above money. What do you think?

A

I swear by the three jewels that I myself am wondering about this.

Q

When you look carefully, every important position was given to someone who had trouble with Reting. E.g. Lhalu, Surkhang, etc. Lhalu was even first appointed as Tsipön.

A

Wasn't Lhalu first appointed Tsipön by Reting?

Q

I don't think so. But Reting might have allowed him to be a Senampa as [Trimön](#) had arranged. But [Taktra](#) might have appointed him Tsipön first and later as the shape.

A

Whether [Trimön](#) arranged it or not, the approval was done by the Regent.

Q

Trimön had helped him to get the Senampa's position and when Janglojen and [Künphel](#) escaped, Janglojen wrote that famous letter mentioning that Lungshar's son, etc.

A

What kind of letter. I never heard of it. I swear by the three jewels.

Q

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This was spread widely.

A

What kind of letter was that?

Q

It said that Lungshar's son, Lhalu [sey](#) said his father was Depön Shekar Lingpa and he became the Senampa and we didn't even get permission to return to our homeland. [tib. lung phrug lha sras skyed byed shel mdar brdzus nas rgyu rkyen gyi go phud/ sras rnam pa'i go mong thob/ gus [tsho](#) rang yul du log 'thus zhus par don smin ma son] Its impossible that you didn't know this. Almost all the government officers can recite it by heart.

A

I swear by the three jewels that I never heard it before today. And about Shekar Lingpa, I only heard that after reading Kusangtse's book. I only had heard that Lhalu said that he is not Lungshar's son but he is the son of Shelkar Lingpa so he got the Senampa status. What we heard was that Lhalu Lhajam went to reteng and [Trimön](#) and Lhalu got the Senampa title and also became the [kandrön](#). That was the Reting period. I was wondering why they did it. I never knew and was wondering why they did it. I never knew about that petition until I read Kusangtse's book. Politics is dirty.

Q

Not only that, but they [sang](#) a song at the time, "If Lhalu is appointed as the shape, it will be scary. Instead of this, if you appoint [Sambo](#), [Panda](#) is strong." [tib. lha klu zhabs pad bskos na/ 'a tsi 'a ma yod red/ de las bsam pho bskos na/ spom mda' hrag hrag yod red]

A

Yes, I read this in Kusangtse's book. In Lhasa small little songs used to come. They were sung by those collecting the water for the Mönlam. These type of songs were not sung by them, but in later years we heard some funny songs, but I thought they were made by [Kapshöba](#) to disgrace someone or other.

Q

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Next important question is that I also heard that when Reting resigned there was some kind of document prepared by the Tsondu that he would resume that office in three years. Is there such a thing?

A

No. There was no such letter. I was in the Tsondu and I kept all the documents and I saw no such thing.

Q

If there was no formal letter, maybe there was a verbal agreement.

A

No such words were there, because I was there. Though I was not inside the room, I could hear everything. Reting said that according to the divination and mirror divination, he could no longer continue and he must resign. He insisted he must resign. Also he said he felt that [Taktra](#) was the most suitable to be Regent. That's all I heard. And these are in the minutes of the Tsondu. I was there. Later it was revealed that there was talk about 3 years, but there was nothing said at that time in the Tsondu.

Q

How did the Reting trouble come?

A

As far as I know, first the bomb came. [the bomb which exploded in Trunyichemmo's Gyambumgang's [tib. rje 'bum sgang] house.

Q

Wasn't there some talk about the butter sculpture festival (tib. [Jönga Chöpa](#) [bco Inga mchod pa]) also? [meaning that they were supposed to kill [Taktra](#) on that night.]

A

No, that we came to know later. I didn't know of that at that time. As far as I was concerned, I was preparing to go to the [Jönga Chöpa](#). I had already put on the Gyaluche

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[tib. rgya lu chas] costume to go. There might have been internal talk, but we didn't know that.

Q

Did you have to go to the Regent's house?

A

No. We had to go to the [Tsuglagang](#) only. From the [Jokhang](#), when the Regent left, we had to follow him around. Then I received a message suddenly. I think the message had come from Shö ga saying that the Trungtsi should not come tonight as the Regent is not going. I was wondering why it was suddenly cancelled, but I went to see the [Jönga Chöpa](#). I thought that if the Regent wasn't coming, how could the Kashag come. It was not possible for the [Trunyichemmo](#) not to go for they had to read out the list of the butter sculptures. Later it was revealed out of documents that we confiscated from Reting Labrang that they were going to send someone to shoot the Regent that night. Not only that, they also revealed they were going to send someone to do an ambush at around Tshakhur Linga [tib. tsha khur gling ga]. This was in the correspondence between Reting Rinpoche and Nyungne Lama [tib. snyung gnas bla ma], etc. They wanted to do this. Reting had written not to do this very strongly many times.

Q

Did Reting Rinpoche say not to do it?

A

He said very strongly that they shouldn't get involved in such activities. Not only this, he also gave some examples in his handwriting. If we get involved in this one day we may even have to go to the northern nomad area where there is not even a single human being living. And also you two [Khardo [tib. mkhar rdo] and Nyungne] may even have to sit in the meditation in room the size of 4 arm-lengths square. Not only that, he also said that at this moment, as far as Reting Labrang is concerned, the stupa may be upside down, but the center of the stupa stays the same. [tib. mchod rten mgo mjug log kyang/ bang rim sked par gnas] (That means that though they have no power, they have good respect). These he wrote many times to them. Later there was a letter from these two Lamas from Lhasa saying that if you don't agree to our suggestion, then we have no alternative but to resign

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from the service of Reting Labrang. For which Reting also said, it will be good if you two go around on a begging pilgrimage [tib. lto skor gnas skor]. Later, he changed his mind.

Q

Afterwards did Reting ever okay it?

A

He didn't say okay, but he said whatever you have to do, do very carefully. We may even have to go to the Indian border near Bhutan [tib. lho 'brug] or if not, if you have to go to the northern nomad land, then that girl may find difficulties because of the cold weather, etc. Finally he made his mind up that he wanted to cross to India from the Bhutan side.

All these documents were exhibited. Reting himself sent many letters urging them not to do such things, such as assassinations. All were in his handwriting. This is definite. Most of them were written by Nyungne Lama and Khardo and most by Nyungne Lama. The letters they sent from Lhasa were in very nice handwriting. They kept all the drafts. Also they kept all the letters that Reting sent to them. They were all in his handwriting. They were on a yellow paper with green ink. So coming back to the point, the first is the bomb. This was supposed to have been given to [Taktra](#) from Doji Yuthok. We didn't know the bomb had come at that time.

A few days later there was a poster [tib. yik skyur] which was thrown inside the Podrang Sarpa [tib. pho brang gsar pa] of [Taktra](#) saying that there was an important letter to be given to the Regent from Doji Yuthok, however it was stopped by Ngawang Namgyel [tib. ngag dbang rnam rgyal]. That particular poster came to the Trungtsi. We discussed this and Ngawang Namgyel told us that he had received one parcel. And then he said it is not good so we had to open it and see what it was. Then he was supposed to have opened it with his servant and it exploded, though we didn't know about that.